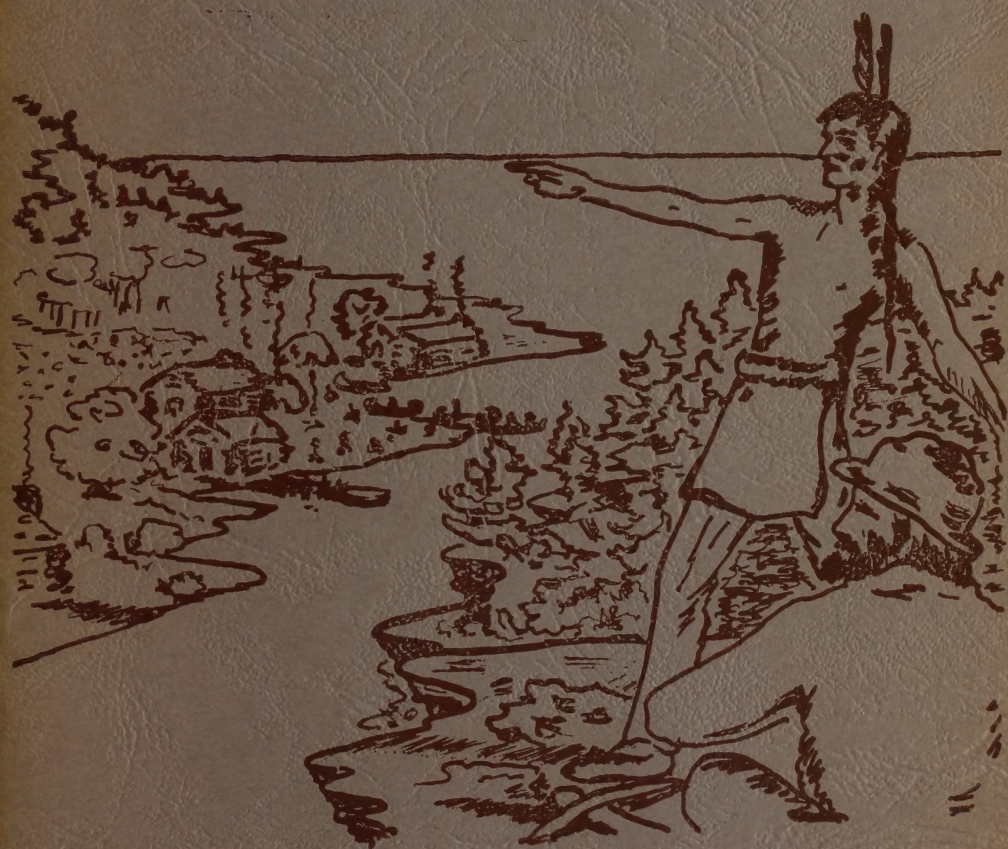


SILVER CITY

By KNOX JAMISON



M-FT

Porcupine Mts. State Park
Sept. 7, 1963

Knox Jamison

A History of
Silver City

Ontonagon County
Michigan



By
KNOX JAMISON

EDITOR'S NOTE

We believe Mr. Knox Jamison is well qualified to tell the story of Silver City. He has lived in this area for one half century, part of that time in the settlement of Silver City. As president of the Ontonagon County Historical Society he has taken an active interest in preserving and recording the history of this Ontonagon country. Some of his other writings have appeared in the Michigan Conservation and Michigan History publications.

Mrs. Knox Jamison contributed the illustration for the front cover of the book.

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Silver City

The little settlement of Silver City, Michigan has one of the most romantic and interesting histories of any town in the state of Michigan. It is located on Lake Superior at the mouth of the Big Iron River, thirteen miles west of the Village of Ontonagon. It was, and still is, the gateway and center of activity of a historic part of Michigan.

The earliest explorers and missionaries knew of the Iron river as all travel was of course by water or on foot then, and the mouth of the river afforded shelter for small craft. The river was first shown on the famous map drafted by the Jesuits in Paris in 1672. Later English maps showed the river with a notation in the general area of "Copper Mines". An official U. S. Government map printed in 1836 first shows the name as Iron river. Why the name was selected is a matter of conjecture. One possible solution is that the high clay banks upstream would discolor the water in the spring or after a heavy rain-storm, to a brownish iron color. The iron formation is several miles west of the river system and its location was unknown at the time the river was named. The Indians had a name for the river, The Piwatie. There are early records of Indians using the mouth as a permanent camp because of good fishing.

The field notes of Charles T. Jackson, United States geologist, show he stayed at Iron River in August of 1847 and explored the Porcupine Mountains. He said that this spot had long been inhabited by a band of Chippewa Indians.

Sometime soon after 1808 the American Fur Company established a log structure trading post which was standing until 1920. Indians used their foot trail from Lake Gogebic to the river's mouth as a fur route. The American Fur Company trade was at its peak between 1816 and 1822 with a large scale operation

throughout Upper Michigan. L'Anse was the main post for the western end of the Upper Peninsula and the central headquarters was Michilimackinac. There were some 64 men working annually for this company during this period as traders, who, in turn, hired several men to assist them in drumming up business. Traders working out of L'Anse were Goodrich Warner and John Holiday. However, by 1834, when Astor sold out his interest in the company to Ramsey Crooks, the peak of the fur traffic was over.

The 1840 fur sales showed a total of \$54,000.00 and by 1850 no sales were mentioned. Some furs were undoubtedly sold to independent traders after that time but the days of the big fur companies were over. Records show that in 1798 the Michigan-Northern Wisconsin and Northern Minnesota area produced 181,150 furred animals of which 106,000 were beavers. Other furs listed were fox, marten, otter, bear, muskrat, wolves, fisher, mink, cats and deer. Even the terrific profit of six hundred to seven hundred per cent that the traders took from the Indians did not pay the companies to operate after 1850.

As late as 1875 the annual report of the superintendent of the St. Mary's ship canal showed 4504 bundles of furs and pelts (100 Lbs. per bundle) being carried through the canal. Also carried on the vessels from Lake Superior ports that year was 847 tons of silver ore, 2125 tons of mass copper, 12,632 tons of ingot copper, and 3,638 tons of stamp work copper.

Even yet today, the region around Silver City produces some fur which is still predominately beaver. Professional trappers eked out a living here as late as 1925.

The fur trade was falling off from 1840 on but a new activity replaced

it. It was the mining industry with its influx of prospectors and miners. Douglas Houghton, state geologist, made his famous report on the minerals of the area in 1841, and J. W. Foster and J. D. Whitney their report to the Congress of the United States on the geology of the district in 1850. Both reports mentioned the Iron river as one of the principal rivers of the Lake Superior district. Copper was known to be present much earlier than this though. In his notes of 1670 Father Deblon stated that near the Nantonagon (Ontonagon) River he was presented with a piece of copper from that locality. First mention of silver was by Alexander Henry in 1771 when he remarked that a stone of eight pounds in weight was found at Point Aux Iroques containing 60 per cent silver. Hardly any of the early explorers noticed or at least mentioned the presence of silver with the copper.

First direct geological report on the immediate area of Iron River was by Mr. Foster who says: "At Iron River, the sandstone is very fissile and of a dark brown color, resembling a slaty rock. This rock dips in a direction different from the general dip of the sandstone which lines the coast. This diversity has been occasioned by the upheaval of the Porcupine Mountains, whose prolongation is at nearly right angles with the general direction of the trap range. The bearing of the sandstone exposed in the stream bed varies from North and South to N40E and S40W." He also states: "It has been asserted that some of the native copper contains a small portion of silver alloyed with it. Native silver also occurs fairly frequently. Up to the present time the quantity of silver occurring with the copper has not been sufficient to make it worth while to separate it from the copper."

The record of Iron River would not be complete if it did not include the early copper mining just west of this settlement in the Porcupine Mountains. Iron River was the nearest civilization to the mountains and many of the supplies for the mines were unloaded there.

In the treaty of La Pointe, on Oct. 4, 1842 on Madelon Island, the Chip-

pewa Indian chiefs met with the United States Government representatives and ceded all their lands in this area to the United States. The treaty covered all lands laying west of the Chocolate River (Chocolay River in Marquette County) and included lands east of the American Fur Company's trading post on the Fond du Lac River. This started the copper boom on the south shore of Lake Superior. Mining permits were issued by the War Department stationed at Porters Island in Copper Harbor (Keweenaw County). Later sub agencies were set up at Ontonagon and La Pointe. By the close of 1846 over 1,000 locations were made and the offices closed to further permits. People were clamoring for these locations to get rich in ten years, the period covered by the permit. The Iron River area saw a great deal of activity as there was many a location in the immediate vicinity. The severe northern winters and isolated country had a dampening effect on the ardor of these early prospectors, many abandoning their claims. On only three of the local permits issued was there serious work done. These companies were the Union, Boston and North American, and LaFayette. Later, by 1855 all lands remaining unsold by the government were open to pre-emption and sale at \$1.25 an acre. The later mines were acquired in this way.

It is necessary to know something of how the early copper mining was done to understand the hardships encountered. There was, of course, no roads whatever, so all transportation was of necessity by water or on foot. After many arduous hours on foot and much prospecting, occasionally an outcropping was found in a stream or hill that contained a vein of copper. Pits were then sunk down to solid rock at several points to prove the lode. Then if capital could be obtained shafts were sunk about 400 feet apart on the lode in depths of 100 feet or more and connected by means of a drift, in order to prove the value of the lode. If the prospects then looked good more extensive mining was begun and a rock house and stamp mill erected for crushing the ore. Diamond drilling

did not come into general use until about 1878. Not many mines reached this last stage because very few actually shipped out any copper; of the few that did reach this stage we will give more detail.

The first mine started in the mountains, the Union, was only four miles from the settlement of Iron River. J. J. Spaulding in charge of work at the mine tells of walking to Iron River to see an Indian Medicine dance. He stated that in 1846 there were fifty men and two white women living at Iron River in addition to the Indians. On the 4th of July he went there to celebrate the holiday. His account states he had a fine time in which he made the following toast: "The miners of Lake Superior, may they paw back the dirt in their progress through the earth and everything they touch turn to copper." All provisions for these early mines came in by sailing vessel, landing the supplies either at Silver City or Union Bay three miles to the west. Several other mining ventures followed in the mountains, notably the Carp Lake, Lafayette, Cuyahoga and Nonesuch.

The Carp Lake holdings reached its peak production in 1865 when it produced 6½ tons of copper. The incentive for mining then was the all time high for copper in 1864, when it sold for 55 cents per pound. There is no record of ore shipped from the Lafayette but it was much less than the Carp Lake. Both mines were closed by 1866. The Carp Lake was opened briefly in 1897 to 1900 but it was exploration only. The Cuyahoga Mining Company began work in 1859, one mile east of the Carp Lake mine. Again it was Cleveland capital that was spent in driving an adit over 200 feet into the bluff and sinking a shaft. The Cuyahoga closed soon after 1865 with only a very small amount of copper having ever been shipped out. Only buildings at Cuyahoga consisted of two log structures 20 x 24 feet and two stories high which were used as office, warehouse, boarding and bunk house. Supplies for all these mines were unloaded along the Lake Superior shore opposite the mines.

By far the most successful early mine in the area was the Nonesuch which was discovered in 1865 by an Indian half breed from Iron River. He noticed the vein outcropping in the Little Iron River in Sec. 1, T.50N, R.43W. It was opened in 1867 by an Ontonagon company and operated under their management until 1873 when more capital was needed. They obtained more funds but were frozen out by Cleveland capitalists. Work continued until 1875 when the stamp mill was destroyed by fire. Captain Thomas Hooper, a reliable mining man, reopened the mine in 1879 and by careful management made it a paying proposition for two years. In 1881 it reached its greatest production with 59½ tons of copper being shipped out by boat from Union Bay. The property was again sold that year and due to poor judgment in the process of milling the ore, it closed a few years later. The mining settlement at the Nonesuch in its heyday of 1881 overshadowed the Iron River settlement, the population of the copper town reaching well over 100 persons and Iron River much less. There was a road of sorts from Iron River to the Nonesuch, and from the Nonesuch south to Lake Gogebic, the latter known as the Bessemer road.

In the early 1920's a score or more of houses and other buildings were still standing. The old tram road for hauling copper with its wooden rails that ran from the mine to Lake Superior could still be followed. The trestle across the river from the shaft house to the stamp mill was in place. Today only the stone foundations of the stamp mill and boiler house can be found.

Iron River played a part in the later copper mines, Halliwell, White Pine Extension, and White Pine. Supplies were unloaded here or at Union Bay for these mines as the roads for the greater part of the year were impassable from Ontonagon west. Even the first supplies for the White Pine Mine were hauled to the Nonesuch and then east across to White Pine. The road from Iron River south to White Pine was not constructed until later.

In 1906 the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company started diamond drilling at the old Nonesuch property. Some supplies were hauled over the wagon road following the lake shore running from Ontonagon to Union Bay and then south to the Nonesuch. However, the heavier materials were hauled by boat to Union Bay and unloaded at a point called Cuyahoga landing. The material was then hauled to the mine site with teams. A scow load of machinery for the Nonesuch stamp mill consisting of 60 tons was delivered at Silver City in August of that year. The exploration crews began working also on the old White Pine location. One shaft had been sunk there years ago and also several test pits. The Nonesuch vein outcrops on this property. Later the Nonesuch operation was abandoned and the C. & H. began their extensive development at White Pine.

Working on the old Nonesuch formation during the summer of 1909 a shaft was started at the White Pine location under the direction of Thomas Wilcox. They reached a depth of 200 feet showing a copper content in the ore of 6 to 10 per cent. The first crew numbered 17 men which was increased to 25 the same year. Exploratory work continued by the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company, organized as the White Pine Copper Company, through to 1914. In October of that year several boats and scows unloaded tons of material for mining and stamping copper at Iron River. From there it was hauled by teams and auto trucks south to White Pine. The teams hauled by far more than the trucks did but it took several months to get all supplies there over a rough road. From that year on for 30 years White Pine overshadowed Silver City in population. During the early forties White Pine's population reached only a handful of people because the mine had been shut down for a long period of nearly 20 years. In 1955 however, the Copper Range Mining Company again reopened the mine on a much greater scale than Calumet and Hecla had done. Over a thousand persons now reside there.

Iron River was just the jumping off place for the copper mines but it was the center of the activity for silver mining. By 1872 the presence of silver in the entire surrounding area was pretty generally known. Native silver was present all along the trap range and its occurrence was common in almost every copper vein or lode found. Now it was this native silver that excited the imagination of prospectors who hoped to find a vein of solid silver. Austin Corser had discovered silver outcropping in the Little Iron River and homesteaded the land on which it occurred. The Indians had brought in several specimens of native silver to the fur trading post long before the miners arrived here.

The nearby copper mines had proved silver to be here, so the time was right for a silver boom and Iron River was the center of the activity, even to getting its name changed to the romantic title of Silver City. Daniel Beaser, a retired great lakes sailing captain, could see that the mouth of the Big Iron River would be the center of the silver mining activity. He plotted the site and named the new town Silver City. As proprietor he sold the lots at prices from \$100.00 to \$150.00 per lot. Log buildings were erected in Silver City, sailing vessels were hauling supplies to the river's mouth, with boats of 4 to 5 foot draft entering the river and docking. The town buzzed with activity and speculation. Silver mining companies were organized and stock sold. Of course most of these companies were speculative and exploratory but six did engage in the business of mining. These were the only active companies: Ontonagon Silver Mining Co., Ontonagon and Lake Superior Co., The Superior Silver Mining Co., The Mammoth Silver Mining Co., Scranton Silver Mining Co., and Cleveland Mining Co.

The peak of the silver boom was during the summer of 1875. A one man chamber of commerce, editor Alfred Meads of the "Ontonagon Miner", tells about conditions then: "The recent very favorable tests of ore from the Iron River silver district had had the effect of stimulating other enterprises in that vicinity,



Nonesuch Mill about 1900. Stamp Mill for crushing and reclaiming copper from ore.



Pictured are a group of 1919 residents of White on the old Iron River Bridge. Left to right they are: James K. Jamison, Peter Sparpanic, Thos. Hutchings, Mike Rubich, Roger Watt, and T. H. Wilcox.

one of which is laying out of a town site on Captain D. Beaser's property at the mouth of the river. It is one of the handsomest locations that could be desired for that purpose and it does seem as if Dame Nature had laid herself out to show what she could do in this way. The beautiful little river that goes rushing along over its rocky bottom, the formations of the land in natural benches one above the other, so that no one need be inconvenienced by having a neighbor in front of him, as well as the good and serenely unlimited expanse of Old Father Superior himself, which makes an admirable foreground for the picturer, and the bold outlines of the Porcupines in the west are only the more prominent features. The fact that the land has been mostly cleared for a great many years and is now ready for occupancy and garden cultivation without the removal of a stump, root or tree is also in its favor.

In the way of business, the new town will also be particularly favored as from its location it is certainly destined to be the seaport and base of supplies of all the mining interests in that vicinity. There is an excellent harbor now for all small craft having six feet of water in the clear, and it is thought that at least ten feet can be secured with a small outlay in dredging.

C. H. Pratt Esq. of Ashland, a surveyor of acknowledged ability, has been engaged to do the work (of platting the town) and we understand that Capt. Beaser proposes to place the lots at very reasonable prices. The plat may be seen and lots secured at his office in Iron River.

A lumber yard with a full stock of everything in that line has already been established there by the Ashland Lumber Company and a general store, meat market etc. will be in full blast in a short time."

This is Mr. Mead's optimistic view of the new town. What actually happened? Buildings were constructed alright. By November there were four large warehouses for the mines located near the harbor. A

boarding house was erected for the Mammoth Silver Mining Comany as well as scores of smaller buildings used mostly as residences.

There were crews of miners working at the Cleveland, Ontonagon & Lake Superior, Hubbell location, Mammoth, Collins, Scranton and Nonesuch. The silver reducing mill had been constructed and was in operation crushing and treating the silver ore from the mines.

The traffic was heavy both by water and by road. The "Minnie V", a steam yacht owned by James Mercer, with P. J. Cusick as captain, was making three trips a week to Silver City and returning to Ontonagon. One of the trips was on Saturday when the boat waited at Silver City until 5:00 p. m. before returning so that the miners could do a little week end celebrating in Ontonagon.

Tugs were hauling scows loaded with freight to the harbor. Mining machinery, building materials, and food supplies comprised most of the freight. The port had to be closed to navigation in December but the stage road was much better after freezing during the winter months, than miring down in the summer mud. One of H. W. Beardsley's stage horses dropped dead while coming from Silver City. It was reported to be congestion of the lungs but it could have been because of the bad road conditions at the time. Harry Rough, who was the oldest stage driver around, took a contract to carry the mail between Ontonagon and Silver City. Visitors to the area could go from Ontonagon and return the same day as fresh horses were available at Silver City.

Prospects looked excellent for the new city in 1875. The following year was to prove different. Work was carried on at the mines on a reduced scale. Men at the Cleveland Silver Mine quit because they had not been paid for several weeks. Finally the force was reduced to just a few men and finally stopped altogether. The Ontonagon and Lake Superior mines received orders to suspend all work and discharge all the men. A very

small crew continued to cut timber for the mine into the fall of 1876, the only activity left in the district. By late fall only a few families remained at Silver City. In fact, in the November election, Carp Lake Township cast a total of 13 votes, 11 Democrats and 2 Republicans. So the silver boom lasted about four years in all, starting in 1872, reaching its peak in 1875 and folding in 1876.

Silver vein rock was found in the river bed of both the Little and Big Iron Rivers containing natural silver. This vein outcropped in the Little Iron River on the $W\frac{1}{2}$ of $W\frac{1}{2}$ of Sec. 13 T. 51 N. R. 42 W. This vein, later found to be outcropping on the Big Iron River was rich in silver ore on the $SE\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 13 T. 51 N. R. 42 W. running in a general east and west direction. With these discoveries, excitement was in the air and many specimens obtained for assaying. Most of the vein rock showed great promise, some assaying for as high as \$1700 of silver per ton of rock. First actual mining was done by the Ontonagon Silver Mining Company in March of 1873, on the $N\frac{1}{2}$ of $NW\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 19 T. 51 N. R. 41 W. The editor of the "Ontonagon Miner" newspaper, Mr. Alfred Meads, states: "Work was commenced on the ground where it was covered with fully four feet of snow, in a section of country perfectly isolated, no roads to reach it and not a single person living there. All their supplies, provisions, tools and camping material had to be hauled from Ontonagon on dog trains or packed up on men's backs. The men were made as comfortable as circumstances would permit in a brush camp. The point selected for their operations was the extreme northwest corner of the $N\frac{1}{2}$ of $NW\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 19 T. 51 N. R. 41 W. Three test pits were sunk to the slate which proved that they were too far north. At length, however, in four weeks from the time they commenced work, they struck the vein about twenty rods south from the east and west line and near the north and south line of their property. It occupied the same geological position as the out-crop on Iron River, at the junction of the slate and sandstone, having the slate

for the north wall and the sandstone for the south or footwall. The width of the vein was the same being about 18 inches wide and fully as rich in native silver and silver ore as the specimens obtained in Iron River. The fact of the vein being found some fifty rods to the east of its outcropping in Iron River very much elated the friends of the district and seemed to prove conclusively that the vein was a continuous one. Land was cleared, roads made, houses built and today they have a neat, well regulated, clean location. After Captain Hooper took charge, another shaft was commenced. The size of the shaft is 9 x 10 feet and has now reached the first level, or about 115 feet from the surface. This shaft is the deepest on the vein in the district and proves conclusively its increasing richness in depth. We understand this company is making arrangements for the erection of a silver reducing mill."

Following this first work the Ontonagon and Lake Superior Company started sinking a shaft near the bank of the Big Iron River on the $N\frac{1}{2}$ of $NE\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 25 T. 51 N. R. 42 W.

The falls now known as the Greenwood, were not overlooked as a water power possibility for a mine or reducing mill and explorative work was done at this point with several pits sunk on the tract known as the Hubbell Location. No company was organized because none of the pits sunk struck the vein.

On the Superior Silver Mining holdings the most extensive mining work was done, probably because of Captain Daniel Beaser. It was the second company to really get down to the serious business of mining. Work started on the east bank of the Iron River about two miles from the river mouth and an adit driven east 120 feet. The vein proved rich in silver, producing \$632.00 of silver per ton of rock. With such a prospect, several houses were built on the property and talk also was heard of a reducing mill to be built the following spring here.

A little more should be said of the founder of Silver City, Captain Beaser who was in charge of the

work at the Superior. As early as November of 1872 while exploring in Sec. 18-51-42 he discovered a rich vein of ore about ten feet from the surface. He put a blast in the silver vein and brought out specimens of the richest ore yet seen in the area. They were displayed in Ontonagon and caused considerable excitement. After the results of the assay of the Superior Silver Mining Company ore, located on the NE $\frac{1}{4}$ of Sec. 24 T. 51 N. R. 42 W, which yielded as high as \$1,716.00 coin value per ton of rock, the excitement really mounted. T. Meads of Marquette wrote: "It now begins to look as if ere many years, the Iron River Silver District, and the grand old Porcupine, may ring with pick and hammer in the midst of the busy hum of a thrifty mining community. Its name will have such a silvery sound that it will be heard to the uttermost parts of the civilized world." Other cities also reported the news. In 1873 the Menominee Herald said, "The silver excitement which has been raging in regard to the discoveries at Iron River is subsiding; the owners being convinced the mineral exists in paying quantities, have settled down to business and have gone to regular mining."

Captain Beaser could not have received much better publicity than this but he had been around a long time and had worked hard at the business of prospecting. In 1861 we find him running for Supervisor of Pewabic Township (later Carp Lake). He was active in the Porcupine Mountains, being agent for the Republic Company and prospecting their lands. In 1863 he reported 20 men working at the Union Mine, 25 men at the Cuyahoga, 50 men at the Carp Lake, 20 men at the LaFayette, 10 men at the Pacific and 10 men at the Republic, all mines located in the Porcupine Mountains. The population of Ontonagon County in 1864 was listed as:

Rockland Township	----	3,326
Ontonagon Township	----	984
Greenland Township	----	503
Algonquin Township	----	315
Carp Lake Township	----	278
Pewabic Township	-----	120
		<hr/>
Total persons	-----	5,526

In fact, Captain Beaser was still active in the 1880's serving two terms as Supervisor of Carp Lake Township.

The Mammoth mine just east of the Scranton showed promise, their test pits and shallow shaft showed rock rich in silver but as capital was scarce no extensive work was done. An office was set up in Ontonagon to try to sell stock.

The Scranton mine was located on the Little Iron River about $\frac{1}{4}$ mile upstream from Lake Superior where the silver vein was first discovered by Austin Corser. He sold his holdings, known as the Corser homestead, to Captain J. Spaulding and other Scranton, Pennsylvania capitalists; thus the name Scranton. The Ontonagon Miner reports the following: "On the completion of the purchase, Captain Hooper was employed and went to work opening the mine. Although winter set so early and snow had already begun to fall before work was fairly commenced, it has been pushed ahead with commendable vigor. A commodious boarding house has been erected for the men and a substantial bridge thrown across the river. Two shafts are now in process of sinking. The No. 1 is a perpendicular on the east side of the river commenced at a point where it is calculated it will strike the vein at a point about 300 feet in depth on the angle or dip of the vein from its outcropping at the surface; in other words, they expect to be able by sinking a perpendicular shaft of 75 feet to attack and prove the value of the vein at this point. The No. 2 shaft has been commenced on the west side of the river. The No. 1 shaft, it is expected will reach the vein before the first of March and No. 2 by spring. From present appearances the Scranton, although one of the latest organized companies and the very last to commence work, will be in a more advanced condition by spring than either of the other companies."

The stockholders of the Cleveland Silver Mining Company were obviously made up of Cleveland men with Judge John C. Edwards as president. They were the last company to do

any appreciable amount of actual mining. The silver vein was found as far south as Sec. 25 on which this mine was located.

In April of 1876 the men at the mine quit work refusing to mine further until they had been paid up for what they had already done. The mine superintendent left for Marquette to obtain more working capital. A few days later he wrote to Capt. Beaser to pay the men saying he could not get to the mine by road because of the conditions of the roads. Work was finally resumed that summer and by August the miners had passed through the black slate and were down to the silver producing vein. The Cleveland Company did have a warehouse at Iron River but Mr. Cash, the Superintendent of the Cleveland Mine received orders in September of 1876 to ship all the horses, tools and supplies to Marquette to be sold there. Thus ended the last work on the silver mines near Iron River.

In 1873 the Ontonagon, Superior, Scranton, Mammoth and Collins Silver Mining Companies each contributed one thousand shares of their capital stock for erecting a reducing mill for testing the vein rock of these companies. The mill was built in 1874 on the Superior holdings consisting of a Blake Rock breaker, five heads of Gates stamps and three Varley's Amalgamating pans. The mill was put into operation on July 2nd and 22 tons of rock were run through by July 17th. From this rock the first brick of silver was made weighing 523 ounces. The size of the brick was 9½" long, 4½" wide and 3" thick, with a value of \$732.00. Figuring the waste in processing this would make the yield of silver as \$35.00 per ton. Later the Scranton mine ore was tested at the mill showing \$45.00 per ton. The Superior Mine also tested five tons of their ore rock which yielded \$56.00 per ton. There is no further record of the other mining companies testing their ore.

The local paper reported that these mining tests proved that the vein carried silver in paying quantities. Silver City seemed to have a bright mining

future but it did not prove out that way. Activity slackened in 1875 and by 1876 a national financial panic stopped all working in the area. The mines were never reopened.

Colonel Charles Whittlesey made a report in the Engineering and Mining Journal publication after the silver boom. He spent the summer of 1876 near Iron River and vicinity tracing the silver producing rock there. At that time the Cleveland Mine on the Big Iron River was the only mine in operation but by that fall they too ceased operations. He states that the owners of mining stock had delusions that the silver band of rock was rich enough to develop itself without capital. When the collapse came in 1875 there had not been money enough spent on the six so-called active mines to develop a single one successfully. However, he concluded, after his study, that the metal bearing bands were uniform in yield, easily mined and easily crushed, could be mined cheaply (about \$2.50 per ton of rock) and with sufficient capital this region presents a promising field not withstanding past experiences. His detailed map of the mineralogy of the area is shown, covering the shoreline from Mineral River west to the Carp Rivers and Porcupine Mountains. The Michigan Commissioner of Mineral Statistics was not so enthusiastic about the possibilities of the area. In his report after the boom he said the silvery visions clouded the minds of the investors and that deer would browse in the streets of Silver City. He wasn't too far wrong, for several years following the boom the population of the area fell to just a handful of people. However, in the present day mining operations at the White Pine copper mine, thousands of dollars of silver is reclaimed each year in the mining of copper ore, but copper is the metal they are after, the silver being secondary.

In describing the geology of the Iron river district in 1875, Professor Charles Rominger of the State Geological survey said: "The silver-bearing rock, generally termed a vein, is actually a sedimentary rock stratum, spreading uniformly over a wide space of ground which forms

the less elevated belt of land in front of the Porcupine mountains, and the higher trap range of the Ontonagon copper mining district. The age of the silver bearing beds is decidedly younger than that of the copper belt. The out-crops are almost exclusively confined to the river beds or deep ravines. The silver-bearing rock is a gray, compact, well-stratified sandstone with thin seams of a black, shaly material, which contains the principal part of the silver in metallic condition. The sand-rock itself is also silver-bearing, but much poorer than the shaly seams. The thickness of the strata is from two to six feet.

Only a few feet above the silver bearing sand-rock there is another series of metalliferous beds, containing finely comminuted metallic copper in astonishing quantity. The Nonesuch mine is working there, and if it were not for the great loss of metal in working the stamped rock I should consider this mine even wealthier than the famous Calumet and Hecla mines, which are unsurpassed in the world. In all the exploring shafts of the silver mining companies this same bed has been noticed."

Remember this was 1875 and we now know this so-called Nonesuch formation does produce more copper than the Calumet and Hecla holdings.

Silver City also came in for its share of activity during the lumbering era. The first logging in the area was for pine and started west of Silver City in Sec. 24, T. 51 N. R. 44 W. near Lone Rock. Dan Norton of Ontonagon was the first logger here, cutting for the Schroeder Lumber Company of Ashland, Wisconsin. The logs consisted of pine and hemlock which were hauled with sleighs to the Lake Superior shore. There they were decked until spring when they were pushed into Lake Superior in booms and towed to the mill at Ashland by tug. Other loggers followed: Francis, McKenzie, Forsyth, Hawley, Bush, Humphrey and J. C. Brown. Several million feet of sawlogs were cut during this period of 1890 to 1913 which marked the end of the early logging. In 1902 a raft of logs was put together in Union

Bay totaling 3 million board feet. These were towed to Bayfield by two tugs. J. C. Brown was not so successful with his boom at Silver City. The story of this venture started in 1898 when Mr. Brown acquired the pine timber rights on several thousands of acres of land along the Big Iron River, a river that drains a 27 square mile area, is approximately 25 miles in length and descends 740 feet from its source to Lake Superior. Mr. Brown had several problems. There were no roads of any kind in this big acreage. The pine were in no solid stands but interspersed with hemlock and hardwood timber. Also the river was too shallow at a few locations to float logs. The first problem was solved by toting supplies into several log camps built well into the interior of the area to be logged. All supplies were hauled in before bad winter weather set in. This wasn't easy, loads often tipped over and became mired in the low areas, sometimes for days. But it was accomplished. The scattered pine problem was solved by skidding great distances to the bank of the river, later to be rolled into the river when during the spring breakup the rising flood waters would be enough to float the logs. To overcome the last hurdle three log dams were built upstream on the river to raise the level of water so logs could be floated in the shallow places. The dams were built, the logs cut, rolled into the river, driven down to the mouth of the Big Iron River and rafted in booms in Lake Superior. Mr. Brown thought he had it made. But he reckoned without Lake Superior. A terrific storm blew up, the boom logs were torn loose and the seven million feet of choice pine logs blown all over Lake Superior. It was physically impossible to try to get or even find these logs after the storm had subsided. J. C. Brown decided to call it a day and declared bankruptcy. A half dozen pine logging camps built in the interior near the river were abandoned with all logging tools, harness, sleighs, kitchenware and other equipment left there. Some of this equipment was recovered by the creditors. Mr. Bigge at the Nonesuch collected some equipment for the bill owed at his store.

Most of the virgin timber immediately adjacent to Silver City was logged by the Greenwood Lumber Company of Ontonagon. A logging railroad connecting with the Chicago, Milwaukee and St. Paul Railroad was built to the Big Iron River in the 1920's where a 100 man logging camp was built. A bridge was built across the river and the railroad tracks laid three miles further west to the edge of this company's timber holding. By 1930 this logging company had completed their cutting.

With the area now logged adjacent to Silver City the forest fire danger greatly increased. Fires had burned practically unchecked every year on cut over lands because there were not many facilities for controlling them. In 1902 a fire started at the Union clearing and burned a large acreage to the north. The same year John Hawley's shingle and tie mill near Union Bay were destroyed by fire with a loss of 10,000 poles, 4,000 ties, and 2 million cedar shingles. In 1905 rain finally stopped fires raging in the vicinity of Green which were so bad the Iron River Road could not be used for over a week. After the early logging west of Union Bay, devastating forest fires burned over an area 10 miles long by at least a mile wide. This area suffered from fires until about 1910. In the 1920's many severe fires burned between White Pine and Green, one so bad that the town of White Pine was practically surrounded by fire. Food and provisions were moved underground so if the town caught fire the people could go underground. A rain finally saved the town. Silver City wasn't so lucky. On August 15, 1931 fires started between White Pine and Silver City. The year was an especially dry one making a very high fire hazard. The state system of fire control had started but as yet was hampered by lack of equipment. It was believed that some one deliberately set the fire because evidence showed the fire to extend over a mile long along the highway when first discovered. This was not uncommon in the early 30's because of lack of jobs. The state would pay \$.25 per hour to men fighting a forest fire and this was a method of getting work.

After a couple of weeks the crew was removed from this fire and it was thought to be under control but on September 19, 1931 a new and larger fire started just west of the first one. High winds and dryness made this a major catastrophe and nearly impossible to control. Before it finally burned out it had burned over 5,000 acres and destroyed most of the homes in Silver City. The summer cottages of Mr. Henry Muskatt, Loranger, Jones, Foley and Thorse all burned. Other buildings owned by Speare and Cusick also were destroyed. All the buildings in the town were in danger but the wind shifted and drove the fire away from them. It was several years before new buildings were constructed to replace them and some never rebuilt.

The last era of cutting timber was from 1940 to 1958, which saw the end of the extensive logging. Several local loggers notably Ruutila and Penegor logged this area as well as several Wisconsin companies. The largest company and the last operating south of the old Nonesuch location was the White River Lumber Company a subsidiary of Hines Lumber Company of Chicago. Many of the "lumberjacks" in this last era lived and worked out of Silver City. All that remains today to be cut is hardwood and poplar pulp. Some of this is still being hauled to the local paper mill in Ontonagon.

We have listed the activities in and around Silver City but what of the people, the social, and political life of the town. The original Pewabic Township included all that part of the County of Ontonagon lying west of Ranges 40 and 41. This was the whole western end of Ontonagon County and all of what is now Gogebic County. This made it a whopper even by Texas standards. Thomas Palmer, Knapp, and other mining men had settled around the river's mouth from 1845 on; but no attempt was made to elect township officers from the time of the organization of Pewabic Township in 1848 by the Michigan legislature, until the fall of 1852.

The political history of Carp Lake Township started then, when at a

meeting of its citizens it was decided to hold its first election. Notices were posted and the election meeting called to order by D. S. Cash. James Vanaestin was chosen moderator and C. P. Barnes, Clerk, with James Styles and Steven Minter inspectors of the election. The old Thomas Palmer house was found to be inconvenient to hold the election in, so the polls were set up in the adjoining residence of Daniel Beaser. At 12:00 Noon the polls were declared open and at 1:00 p. m. declared closed. The canvass of votes showed a total of six. James Vanaestin was elected suervisor and C. P. Barnes, clerk and treasurer. Four Justices of the Peace, a School Inspector, Directors of the Poor, Assessors, Commissioners of Highways and four Constables. Several of the men held two different offices.

Elections were held on each year thereafter in April as provided for by law. All other elections for Pewabic Township were held at the Norwich mine or one of the nearby mines. The mining offices of the Norwich, Windsor, and Hamilton Mining Companies were used for these elections. Number of ballots cast varied from 140 in 1855 to 12 votes in 1859. These early township boards only met a few times each year, usually about twice. In fact, on March 28, 1854 when the annual meeting of the board was held, the record states there being no business the meeting was adjourned. Probably the shortest political meeting on record. However, later in 1854 the first school district was organized consisting of Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 11 and 12 of T. 49 N. R 41 W. It was to be known as School district No. 1 of the Township of Pewabic. The record also shows the school inspectors hiring a Miss Helen Dach in 1858 to teach for a period of 2 years.

No moneys were raised until 1855 when expenses of \$250.00 for road purposes and \$100.00 for other township expenses were submitted to the electors. School and roads accounted for the principal expenditures. In 1856 a report of the Commissioner of Highways shows that \$706.50 was spent for a road from the Merryweather Mine to the Presque Isle

River, a distance of eight miles. The bill was broken down as follows:

8 miles, Cutting out road	
@ \$10.00 per mile -----	\$80.00
Raising Derby bridge 6 feet	
and extending length 10' --	50.00
Grading Saw Pit Hill -----	35.00
Repairing road from Merryweather	
Mine to Clinton Mine -----	44.00
Raising bridge near Indian	
Grave -----	80.00
Constructing bridge near house	
of Thomas McDonald ----	407.50
Balance of cutting road from	
said bridge -----	10.00
Total -----	\$706.50

Also a survey of a road from Black River to Ontonagon was authorized. The line followed the west side of Lake Gogebic thence to Cascade Falls and along the mine locations near the Norwich, thence North to Deer Creek and intersecting Ontonagon in Selby's and Paul's Addition.

Most years the total expenditures did not exceed \$1,000.00. In 1861 bills allowed at the annual meeting were:

1. Township Board -----	\$181.36
2. School -----	413.81
3. Highway -----	329.99
Total -----	\$925.16

Supervisors usually held office for several years. First elected for Pewabic Township was Vanaestin followed by A. C. Davis, Daniel Plummer for three years, then A. C. Davis for four more years and finally Peter Bowen through 1864. With the population down sharply during the later years, Bowen pretty well controlled the Township. In 1862 he not only was Supervisor but also was Treasurer and in addition his son was Clerk. That pretty well tied up affair of the Township in one family.

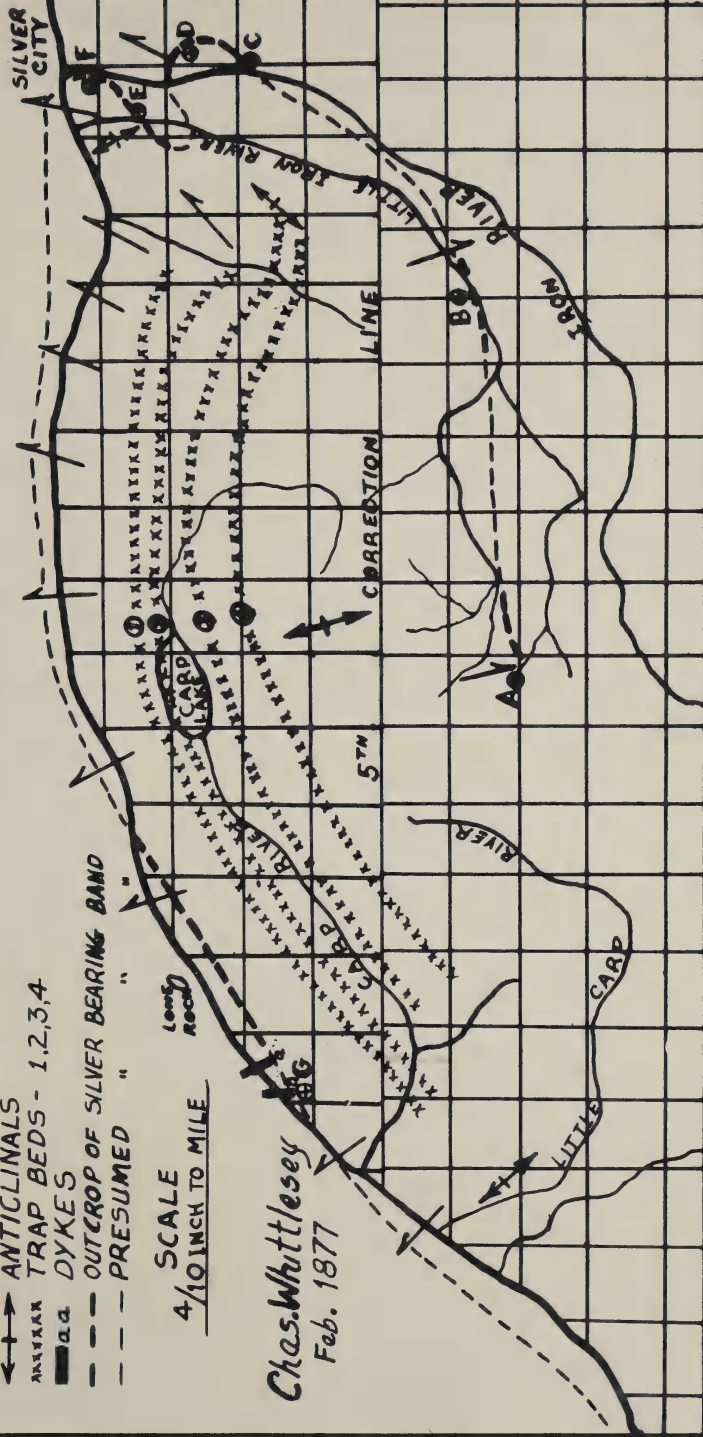
With the organization of Carp Lake Township in 1864 the Township of Pewabic ceased to be in existence shortly after. The County Board of Supervisors met at Ontonagon on January 26, 1864 with the following supervisors present: Frank G. White of Rockland Township, William Dickinson of Algonquin, Artemus Doolit-

LAKE SUPERIOR

- DIRECTION OF DIP
- ← ANTICLINALS
- ||||| TRAP BEDS - 1,2,3,4
- aa DYKES
- OUTCROP OF SILVER BEARING BAND
- - - PRESUMED "

SCALE
4/10 INCH TO MILE

Chas. Whittlesey
Feb. 1877



Local Sections of the Quartzose, Copper, and Silver-Bearing Group
Lying Between the Black Slate and Lower Potsdam Sandstone

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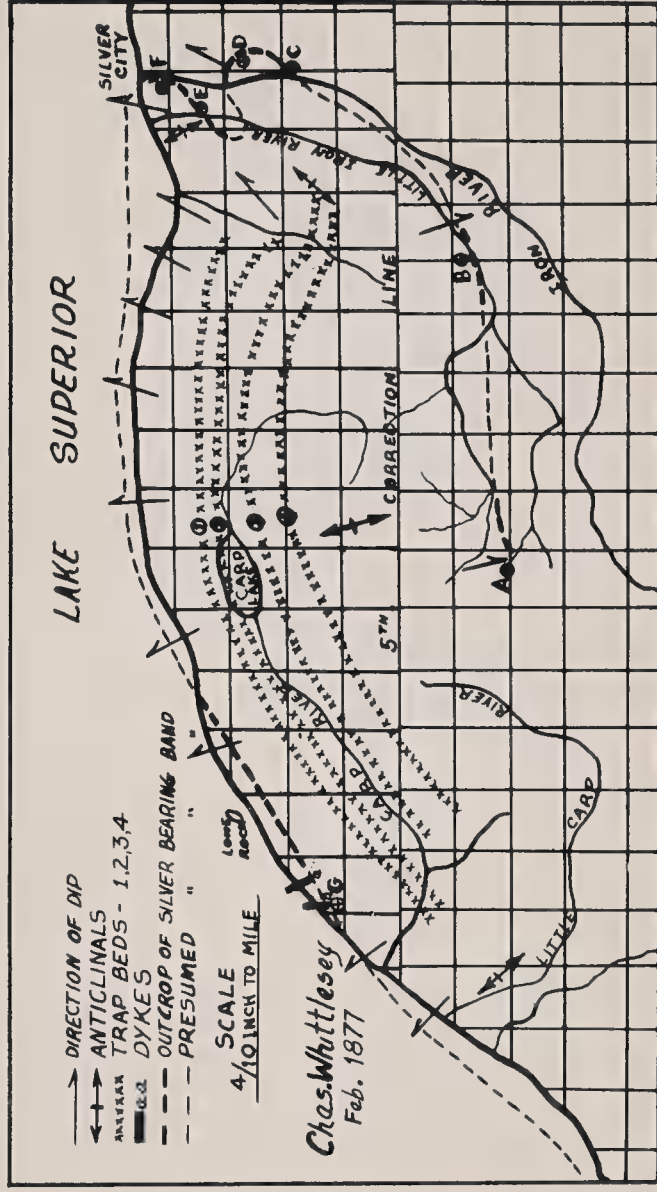
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lying Between the Black Slate and Lower Potsdam Sandstone.
Iron River, Michigan

A - Cumming's Location-	Sec. 12 T.50N. R.44W.	- Quartzite, Carrying Silver
B - Nonesuch Mine	Sec. 1 T.50N. R.43W.	- Gray Quartzite "
C - Cleveland Mine	Sec. 25 T.51N. R.42W.	- " Rich in Silver
D - Superior Mine	Sec. 25 "	- Reddish Gray Quartzite
E - Scranton Mine	Sec. 13 T.51N. R.42W.	- Carrying Silver "
F - Hubbel Shaft	Sec. 13 "	- Quartzite, No Silver Visible
G - Lone Rock Location-	Sec. 26 T.51N. R.44W.	- "

Rocks From Iron River West Along Coast to Carp River
Locality and Character of Strata

Mouth of Iron River	- Slate
Cuyahoga Landing	- Sandstone
1 1/3 mile NW "	- Conglomerate
1 1/4 mile NW "	- Pebble beach
Carp Lake Mine Landing	- Sandstone
Foster & Whitney (Sec. 16)	- "
Lone Rock	- "
Lafayette Landing	- "
Beaser's Trail (Sec. 26)	- Great Spar Vlen
Presque Isle Point (Sec. 27)	- Base of Slate and Quartzite Band
Midway (Sec. 34 T51N R44W)	- Sandstone
Mouth of Carp River	- Conglomerate
	- Sandstone

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- "

- Great Spar Vien

- Base of Slate and Quartzite Band

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- Sandstone

tle of Ontonagon, Jonas McLean of Greenland and Peter Bowen of Pewabic. A petition was presented to the board for the division of the Township of Pewabic and for the erection of a new township to be known as Carp Lake. Application was made by Captain D. Beaser and others for this, with maps prepared showing the territory described in the application. Lands covered in application were 7 townships, Town 50 North, Ranges 42, 43 and 44; Town 51 North, Ranges 41, 42, 43 and 44. These lands were to be detached from the political Township of Pewabic and called Carp Lake. The first annual meeting was to be held at the office of the Carp Lake Mining Company in the Porcupine Mountains on April 4, 1864. Frank Salisbury, John and Louis Lashapell were named electors to preside at the meeting and conduct the election. The vote on this petition was four to one; Mr. Bowen of course protesting. But Carp Lake it was from that date on, and it still remains one of the largest political townships in Michigan.

During the silver boom from 1873 to 1876 school was held in a frame building located just east of the present Machamer store. Part of the building had been used as a warehouse at one time. After the silver mines shut down, nearly all the families moved away so there was no need for a school at Silver City until 1903. The old Goslin house was used as a school for one year and the following year a combination school-township office building was constructed on the property now occupied by Silver Court. School was conducted here for six years; Miss Motherway and Miss Cronin serving as teachers during this time with a peak class of six pupils. The building was later sold to Captain Wilcox and finally burned down in the Silver City fire.

At the Nonesuch mine school was in session on and off from 1880 to 1913, depending on whether there was any activity at the mine. The classes varied from a high of thirty children in 1883 to a low of two pupils, the Bigge boys, George and Gus in 1893. For a few years after 1900 there was no school conducted

at the Nonesuch, or for that matter anywhere in the township, but with the renewed exploratory work by the Calumet and Hecla company, school was resumed from 1908 through to 1913 at the Nonesuch. Soon after all mining activity ceased and all the families moved from this location, the two Watt sisters were the last class with Kate Bertrand as their teacher. School was held for a couple of years at White Pine Extension about this same period.

After the Finnish families and other farmers settled on the land near Green, the need for a school arose there. In 1906 the first school was built with about thirty children in attendance. By 1922 this farming community had grown so a two room school was erected a mile south of the first school. This school was used continuously for thirty one years, Julia Harris teaching there for thirty out of the thirty one. The population of White Pine had reached such a low ebb by 1942 that all school children were hauled by bus to the Green school from that date until 1953.

With the new mine development by the Copper Range Company, White Pine again became the center of population of the township. The Green school was discontinued after that date, all children in the township being transported to White Pine. Two large, modern school buildings were constructed there with a present enrollment of over 300 pupils.

First actual census figures we have for Carp Lake Township were in 1890 when there were 18 persons listed. By 1900 th's had risen to 69 persons, and by 1910 to 139 persons. In 1846 Spaulding listed 52 persons at Silver City and there was not over a dozen at the Union workings making about 69 persons in that year. The figures after 1890 are not too accurate for permanent residents because often times the transient lumberjacks were counted in the census and registered so they could vote. Old timers, yet living, say that there were not over twenty permanent residents of Carp Lake Township in 1900 and of these 15 lived at Silver City. Of the permanent residents, Philip

Less lived there longer than any other person.

In the entire period from 1896 to 1919 the Carp Lake Township clerk's "register of electors" show the following: (women could not vote):

White Pine -----	150 men
Green -----	80 men
Silver City -----	49 men
Nonesuch -----	49 men
Union -----	21 men
Halliwell -----	9 men
Carp Lake Mine -----	3 men
Hawleys Mill -----	6 men
White Pine Extension ----	37 men
Lumber camps including MacKenzie, Bush, Humphrey, Forsyth, Spies and McMillan --	98 men
All others—mostly White Pine residence not recorded --	275 men

Total ----- 780 men
(780 persons registered in 23 years)

You will note that the bulk of the people during this period lived at White Pine Mine which was operating the last 10 years of this period. You will also note that Silver City is holding its own with 52 persons registered. It is a little surprising that the Nonesuch would record 49 men as there was very little mining activity there then; but here again there may have been some logging near there during this period and the workers lived in this location. Also Calumet and Hecla did quite a lot of diamond drilling there from 1906 to 1909.

After the division of Pewabic Township in 1864 the population remained very small until the White Pine Mine was developed starting about 1910. A caucus for Carp Lake Township was held in the office at Iron River (Silver City) in April of 1905 and nominated the following ticket:

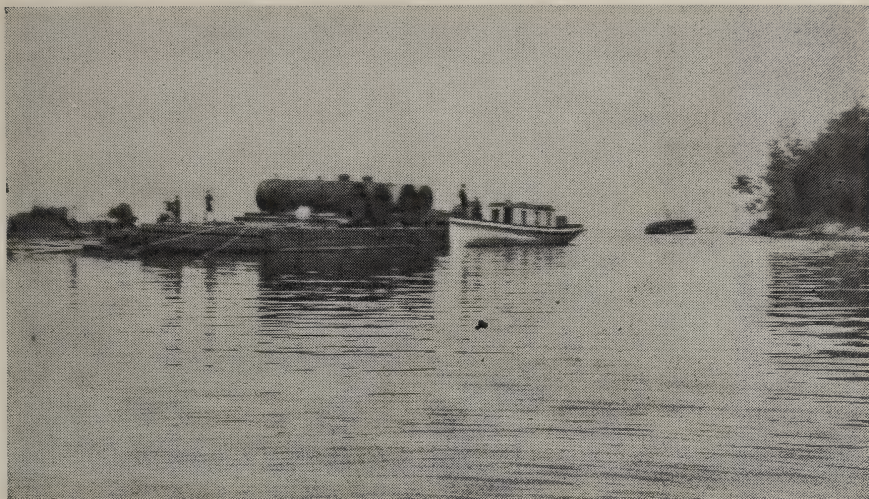
Supervisor, H. D. McKenzie
Clerk, R. J. Watt
Treasurer, Norman Pennock
Commissioner, Gordon McLain
Overseer, Gordon McLain
Justices, A. Ludescher, Norman Pennock

Constables, Joe Sellers, George Bailey, Charles Burgess and William Landing

There weren't enough candidates for all the offices so two men held down four jobs. There was only a total of 29 ballots cast in the township. In 1906 there were 38 ballots cast in the township election with the only contest being for treasurer with a tie vote of 19 apiece for the candidates. In 1907 there were 48 votes cast and the same number in 1908. Because of the small number of voters and the same men holding several offices, the state tax commission investigated the affairs of Carp Lake Township, checking management and grafting in handling the affairs of the township offices. Talk was of introducing a bill in the state legislature asking for the abolishment of Carp Lake Township and combining it with Ontonagon. However, Carp Lake survived the investigation and remained separate. If there was grafting it could not have been on a large scale as the total assessed valuation of the entire township was still low in 1905.

In 1905 a few families did come and settle in the township on Sec. 12 T. 51 N. R. 41 W. near what is now the town of Green. These were Finnish families who wished to farm. They started erecting houses and clearing land. They asked that a road be built extending back from the lake for $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to give them an outlet to the lake. There was a wagon road from Ontonagon to there that supplies could be hauled on.

Early travel to the Ontonagon area was largely by boat. There were innumerable small craft on the lake but few large boats. The Astor was the first American vessel launched on Lake Superior, being built by the American Fur Company at Sault Ste. Marie in 1835 and sailing until 1844 when it was wrecked at Copper Harbor. Even by 1846 the entire fleet on Lake Superior only numbered eleven vessels in all; they were the steamboat Julia Palmer of 280 tons, the propeller Independence of 280 tons, schooners Napoleon, Algonquin, Swallow, Merchant, Uncle Tom, Fur Trader, Chippewa, Siskawit and White Fish. The Napoleon was the largest of the schooners being 180 ton, the others were smaller some down to only forty ton. Coasting



Boilers on scows in Iron River Harbor in 1914. The gas boat is the "Silver City", owned by McKenzie. Boilers were hauled to White Pine.



Main Street of White Pine in 1914

distances from Sault Ste. Marie to Ontonagon was listed as 379 with a notation of a six foot depth of water over the sand bar at the river's mouth. Iron river was listed as 391 miles with just the words, boat harbor.

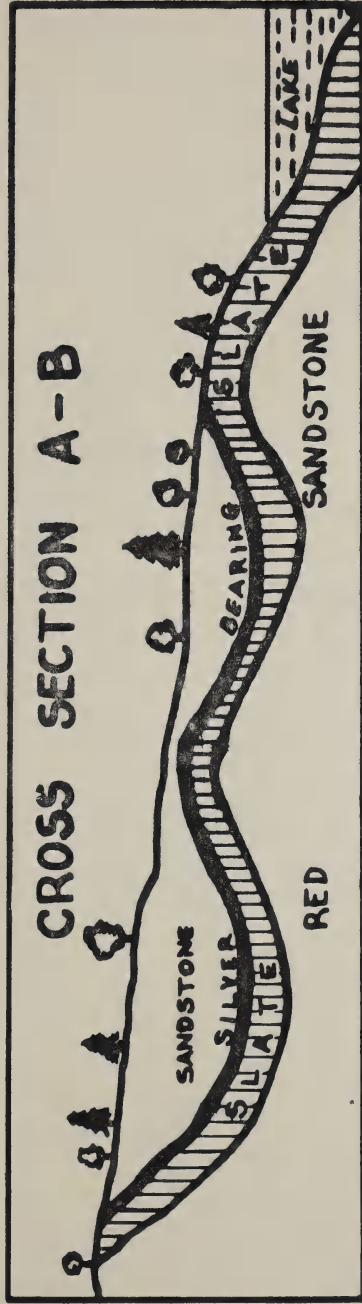
Travel to this area was largely by boat until about 1900, but attempts were made at roads as early as 1846. In that year the Indians cut out a road from Union Bay on Lake Superior south to the Union Mine a distance of 1½ miles. This was the first road in Ontonagon County and one of the first in Upper Michigan. In 1864, the Union, LaFayette and Cuyahoga mines contracted a winter road (only passable while the ground was frozen) from Ontonagon west to the Cuyahoga mine, a distance of 20 miles. The work required cutting out a right-of-way and building several bridges. It was completed in one month with a small crew, so was little better than a trail. However, horses hauled supplies over it from Ontonagon to the mine. Most of the rivers had no bridge, the horses and sleighs crossing on the ice. This road became known as the Iron River Road and its location was approximately the same as present state highway M-64 and M-107. The mining activity ceased soon after this, so not much work was done on this road until the loggers began moving west of Ontonagon. In July of 1877 the local newspaper stated that Carp Lake Township was working on the road which they called a disgrace, saying too much of their highway fund was being spent on the Nonesuch Road and neglecting the Iron River Road. In 1896 Michael Dolan took a contract to build a bridge across the Potato River on the Iron River Road, his bid being \$175.00. This was a crude timber bridge but usable for teams of horses to cross and was located approximately four miles west of Ontonagon. By 1897 road overseer Duncan Ross was working with a crew at the bridge at the Little Cranberry River, which is six miles west of Ontonagon. During that year the county and township officials were being asked to improve this road by the Halliwell, Nonesuch, and Carp Lake Mines beyond Silver City. Supervisor Joseph

Bigge of the Nonesuch Mine said that a better road was needed. He used a boat to make the trip between Union Bay and Ontonagon to attend the board of supervisors meeting on April 24, 1897.

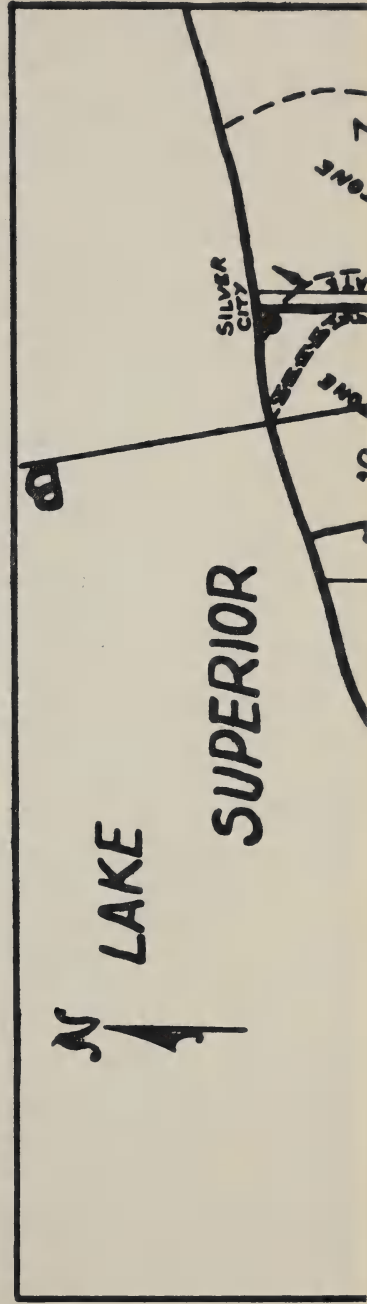
The first logging in Carp Lake Township was in 1890 along the shore of Lake Superior near Lone Rock about 15 miles west of Silver City. Most of the supplies were hauled by boat but within a few years other loggers entered the area and the tote road (Iron River Road) was improved somewhat. On August 29, 1901, highway commissioner Hugo Bigge was advertising for bids for cutting a roadway from the west Ontonagon Township line two miles toward Iron River. Supplies were still coming in by water, the steamer Mabel Bradshaw in December 1900 landed a large quantity of camp supplies at Lone Rock for McKenzie's camp. In July of 1901 the Emerald of Buffalo stopped at the John McVean mill near Union Bay to take on a cargo of cedar shingles, ties and telephone poles for Cleveland. In August of 1900 the steamer Bon Voyage landed 26 lumberjacks and about 50 tons of supplies for D. J. Norton at Union Bay. There were about 35 men at Norton's camp and about the same number at McKenzie's. In November of 1899 the local tug "Tramp" went to Lone Rock with a cargo of winter supplies for Norton's camp.

Work on the "Iron River Road" continued however, in November of 1901 a bridge was constructed across the Little Iron River just west of Silver City. The old log bridge across the Big Iron River had already been built upstream nearly ¼ mile from the river's mouth. During the next ten year period some work was done each year by the township highway commissioner and overseer. In fact the job became somewhat of a political plum because quite a few jobs could be passed out and it was a matter of record that no one overworked on the job. During this period Carp Lake Township was at one of its low ebbs in population so the road building was the big project at the time for its permanent citizens. By 1910 there was a passable road

1878



THE IRON RIVER SILVER DISTRICT



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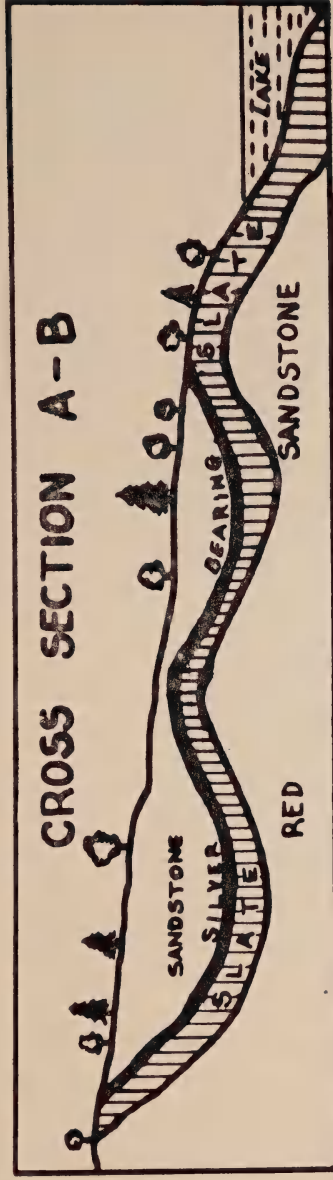
Travel to this area was largely by boat until about 1900, but attempts were made at roads as early as 1846. In that year the Indians cut out a road from Union Bay on Lake Superior south to the Union Mine a distance of 1½ miles. This was the first road in Ontonagon County and one of the first in Upper Michigan. In 1864, the Union, LaFayette and Cuyahoga mines contracted a winter road (only passable while the ground was frozen) from Ontonagon west to the Cuyahoga mine, a distance of 20 miles. The work required cutting out a right-of-way and building several bridges. It was completed in one month with a small crew, so was little better than a trail. However, horses hauled supplies over it from Ontonagon to the mine. Most of the rivers had no bridge, the horses and sleighs crossing on the ice. This road became known as the Iron River Road and its location was approximately the same as present state highway M-64 and M-107. The mining activity ceased soon after this, so not much work was done on this road until the loggers began moving west of Ontonagon. In July of 1877 the local newspaper stated that Carp Lake Township was working on the road which they called a disgrace, saying too much of their highway fund was being spent on the Nonesuch Road and neglecting the Iron River Road. In 1896 Michael Dolan took a contract to build a bridge across the Potato River on the Iron River Road, his bid being \$175.00. This was a crude timber bridge but usable for teams of horses to cross and was located approximately four miles west of Ontonagon. By 1897 road overseer Duncan Ross was working with a crew at the bridge at the Little Cranberry River, which is six miles west of Ontonagon. During that year the county and township officials were being asked to improve this road by the Halliwell, Nonesuch, and Carp Lake Mines beyond Silver City. Supervisor Joseph

Bigge of the Nonesuch Mine said that a better road was needed. He used a boat to make the trip between Union Bay and Ontonagon to attend the board of supervisors meeting on April 24, 1897.

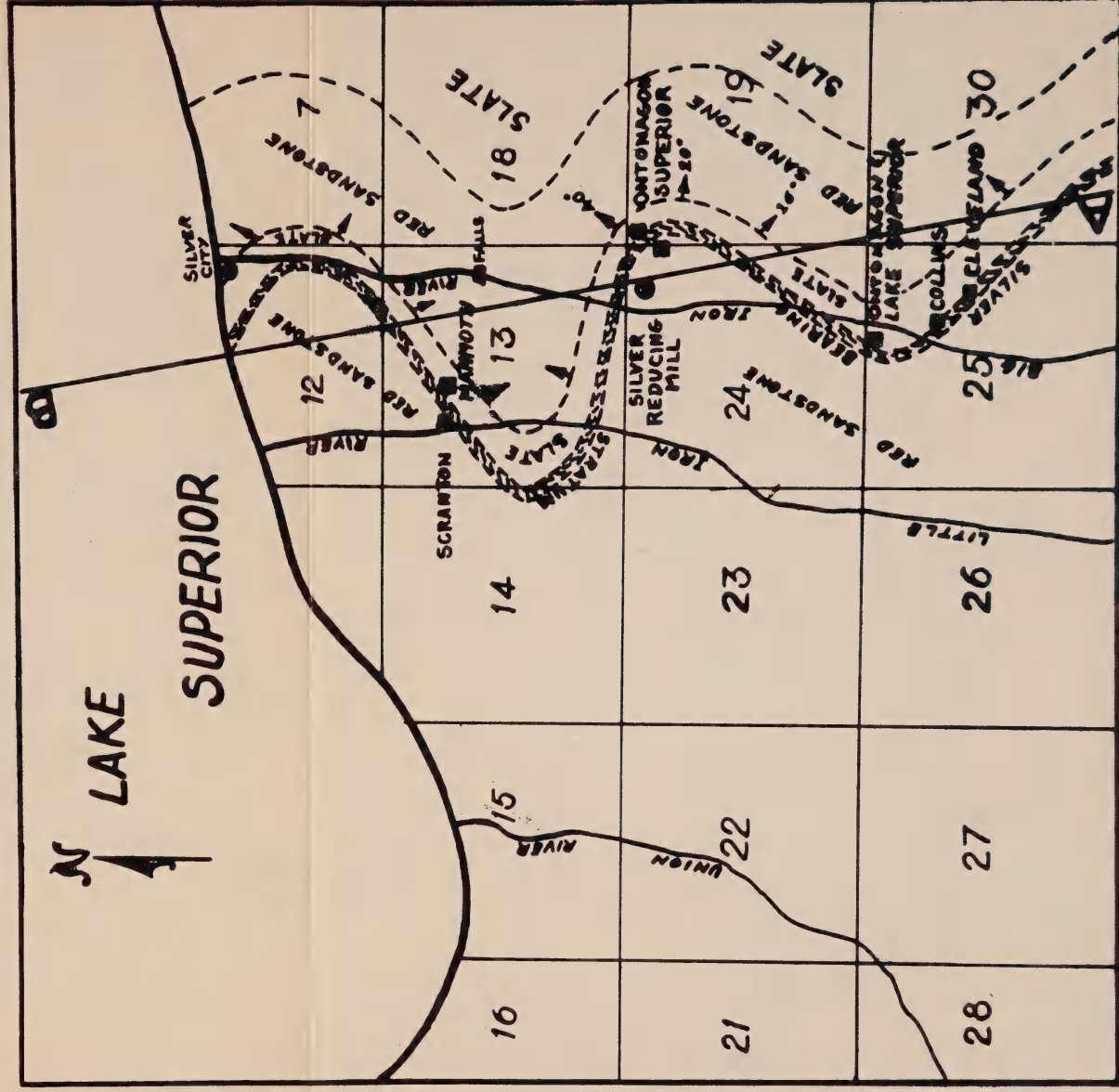
The first logging in Carp Lake Township was in 1890 along the shore of Lake Superior near Lone Rock about 15 miles west of Silver City. Most of the supplies were hauled by boat but within a few years other loggers entered the area and the tote road (Iron River Road) was improved somewhat. On August 29, 1901, highway commissioner Hugo Bigge was advertising for bids for cutting a roadway from the west Ontonagon Township line two miles toward Iron River. Supplies were still coming in by water, the steamer Mabel Bradshaw in December 1900 landed a large quantity of camp supplies at Lone Rock for McKenzie's camp. In July of 1901 the Emerald of Buffalo stopped at the John McVean mill near Union Bay to take on a cargo of cedar shingles, ties and telephone poles for Cleveland. In August of 1900 the steamer Bon Voyage landed 26 lumberjacks and about 50 tons of supplies for D. J. Norton at Union Bay. There were about 35 men at Norton's camp and about the same number at McKenzie's. In November of 1899 the local tug "Tramp" went to Lone Rock with a cargo of winter supplies for Norton's camp.

Work on the "Iron River Road" continued however, in November of 1901 a bridge was constructed across the Little Iron River just west of Silver City. The old log bridge across the Big Iron River had already been built upstream nearly ¼ mile from the river's mouth. During the next ten year period some work was done each year by the township highway commissioner and overseer. In fact the job became somewhat of a political plum because quite a few jobs could be passed out and it was a matter of record that no one overworked on the job. During this period Carp Lake Township was at one of its low ebbs in population so the road building was the big project at the time for its permanent citizens. By 1910 there was a passable road

1878



THE IRON RIVER SILVER DISTRICT





from Ontonagon, through Silver City, to the Nonesuch. It was not much of a highway but by tying yourself to the rig so as not to fall out you could get through; and you better not try it during spring breakup or after heavy rains.

One of the highlights of the Silver City history was the wreck of the Panama on Mineral point, one mile away from Iron River. During the latter part of November in 1906 this steam barge loaded with coal and almost water logged ran ashore during a heavy storm. The boat was bound for Duluth with 3300 tons of coal aboard and also was towing a coal barge known as the Matanzas. The Panama sprung a leak so bad that the pumps could not take care of the inflowing water so the captain headed for shore about 27 miles distant. The tow line of the Matanzas was severed to make better time. About midnight the Panama ran aground off of Mineral Point with all the crew safely reaching shore. Local citizens of Silver City housed the crew, most of them staying at the McKenzie home. The steam barge Panama was abandoned by the owner Captain James Davidson of Bay City. It was valued at \$42,000.00 and not insured.

There was the usual wolf stories in the area. George Bigge stated that several wolves followed his team and sleigh from Union Bay to the Halliwell mine location. The pack was up to 25 by the time he had reached the Halliwell so George ran the team in one of the old buildings there and stayed for the night before continuing on to Nonesuch next day. The story is a good one but George was known to imbibe quite freely at times and there is a question of some exaggeration. Thomas Supple was resident of Silver City in 1905 and had been working out of the prospecting camp of Dr. Garlick near Union Bay. While visiting his trap line in March near the old Cuyahoga dock at Union Bay he saw a wolf pass by, then a second and a third. He had a rifle with him so decided to walk out on the ice to be able to see a longer distance. He discovered three wolves ahead of him on the ice and two more on shore.

One of the wolves was snapping his teeth at him, so when the wolf approached within twenty feet of him Supple fired, killing the animal, who was as big as a St. Bernard dog. The shot scared the other wolves away. Supple collected the \$22.00 bounty for the animal. Now later it appeared that Henry McLain, another local trapper, claimed that Supple had found the wolf dead on the ice from poison. This was a common practice then to set out poison meat for animals. McLain claimed Supple sent a bullet through the dead wolf to make it look like he killed it. No one was certain who was telling the truth because no autopsy was held on the wolf.

The writer remembers Silver City from 1919 on, as he stayed there that summer and has either visited or lived near there each year since. At that time there were just three permanent residents of Silver City. Jim Cusick, a trapper and story teller. I was 11 years old at the time and he told some pretty wild but interesting tales especially of the West. The record shows he went to Boise City, Idaho in 1897 to mine gold so maybe some were true. He did shoot up Robinson's saloon in Ontonagon one night in a drunken spree. An exact opposite of Jim was Charles Wells who kept a large garden each year and maintained a spotless cabin. The third resident was Charlie Miller. Everyone said Charlie was a miser and maybe he was. I remember him telling my mother that the match companies did not put as many matches in a box as they used to. One box would last him a year. The summer spent there was one of the most enjoyable of my life; I fished, swam, hiked and played as an 11 year old boy would.

Silver City's population didn't increase much until about 1930. Several Ontonagon people and some from other towns had summer cottages, but did not live there all year. But by the late 30's people were starting to pay attention to a strange new breed called the tourist. Oh, there were a few visitors to the area before then and the outside hunter was here as early as 1900 but the total was relatively

few. They increased in the 40's and by 1945 a few persons of vision, notably Mr. P. J. Hoffmaster, then Director of the Michigan Conservation Department, thought something should be done about it. Here was an area of outstanding scenic beauty still left in its original condition that the public wanted to see. It was becoming more and more unique as the last remaining section of Michigan that had been untouched by commercialism. Such an area was a valuable commodity to sell these so-called tourists. The United States Forest Service already had acquired a small acreage near Lake of the Clouds in the Porcupine mountains and by 1945 the State had built a good highway to within a mile of this great scenic attraction. Thousands of people were already visiting the site each summer. With this great demand and the efforts of a group of dedicated citizens, the Michigan state legislature established the Porcupine Mountains State Park just west of Silver City.

The original White Pine mine operated by the Calumet and Hecla company closed in 1918 but resumed operations during the fall of 1919. A few years later this company again stopped operating. Soon after they sold to the Copper Range Mining company and after extensive diamond drilling this company started the construction of a major mining venture on March 16, 1952. The first 700

pound copper ingot was poured at the smelter building on Jan. 13, 1955 and big scale production started. Again the foresight of a few men, including Captain Beaser and the early prospectors of Silver City, made this huge project possible. A multi-million dollar government loan and improved methods of milling the ore were the other necessary factors. Silver City still plays a part in this last mining development, the water plant for the present White Pine Copper company is located here and numerous mine workers live at Silver City. So less than six miles from the great excitement of 1872-1876 the White Pine Copper company now produces more copper in one year than all the mines in this area ever produced in their entire existence, totaling 5% of the output of the United States. The early silver mining men were not as far wrong as their critics predicted either, for thousands of dollars of silver is reclaimed each year in the present day operation.

With the development of White Pine and the Porcupine Mountains State Park at least 200,000 persons a year now pass through the gateway to the area, Silver City. The early missionaries and explorers in 1672 recognized the mouth of Iron river as a natural gateway, later the fur traders, the miners, the lumbermen and finally the recreation seekers. It still remains the gateway to adventure.

